

VZCZCXRO3883
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHAK #3435/01 1601504
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 091504Z JUN 06
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 646
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIRITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUCBNLA/COMUSNAVEUR DET ONE LONDON UK//POLAD// PRIORITY
RHMFISS/USNMR SHAPE BE//SA/SACEUR// PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY
RHMFISS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/425ABS IZMIR TU//CC// PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 003435

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/07/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [TU](#) [RS](#) [BU](#) [RO](#) [GG](#) [UP](#)
SUBJECT: BLACK SEA: ADMIRAL OUTLINES CURRENT TURKISH
THINKING

REF: STATE 79658

Classified By: Counselor for Political-Military Affairs Timothy A. Bett
s for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

¶1. (C/REL USA, GBR, AUS, CAN) Turkey is pleased with Russia's continually improving attitude toward Euro-Atlantic cooperation in maritime security, the Turkish Navy's N5 RADM (LH) Cem Gurdeniz told us June 7. Gurdeniz thanked us for persuading Romania and Bulgaria to be more positive toward Operation BLACK SEA HARMONY (OBSH), and asked us to weigh in with Georgia as well. Turkey will work to enhance NATO interaction with OBHS, though it may be some time before Turkey can welcome a NATO observer. Gurdeniz outlined a modest vision for the future of BLACKSEAFOR. End summary.

Russia's Coming Along

¶2. (C/REL USA, GBR, AUS, CAN) We met June 7 with Turkish Naval Forces N5 RADM (LH) Cem Gurdeniz to discuss developments in Black Sea maritime security issues. Gurdeniz provided an update of GOT and TUN activities to multilateralize Operation BLACK SEA HARMONY (OBHS), Turkey's maritime interdiction operation in the Black Sea. He reported that Turkey is continuing efforts with Russia and Ukraine to complete the formalities necessary for both countries to join OBHS soon. He noted that both Ukraine and Russia have been very positive toward both Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOR (OAE) and OBHS; indeed, Turkey has offered to support Ukrainian vessels participating in OAE from Aksaz naval base.

¶3. (C/REL USA, GBR, AUS, CAN) Gurdeniz is particularly pleased with what he called Russia's increasingly positive attitude toward Euro-Atlantic cooperation in maritime security. He believes Russia has turned a corner in supporting multilateral cooperation in this area. That said, he lamented how long it has taken for Russia to actually begin active participation in both MIO operations.

Progress in BLACK SEA HARMONY

¶4. (C/REL USA, GBR, AUS, CAN) Gurdeniz also reported that talks continue with Romania and Bulgaria on their participation in OBHS. GOT and TUN officials met with GOB

and BUN officials May 2 in Sofia where, Gurdeniz asserted, Turkey laid to rest Bulgarian concerns that any other nation would have operational control over Bulgarian vessels under OBSH and that OBSH would have a unified command. (COMMENT: We are not so sure Bulgaria is convinced. END COMMENT.) Gurdeniz said OAE and OBSH differ in that under OBSH, nations will be responsible for covering their own area (typically EEZ waters) and will retain complete command and control over national assets. Nations will then report data to their national representatives at a TUN facility in Eregli (about 170 km east of Istanbul), which in turn passes the data on to NATO's Allied Maritime Component Command (CC-MAR) in Naples, which oversees OAE.

15. (C/REL USA, GBR, AUS, CAN) Gurdeniz added that he was pleased with Romania's May 9 announcement that it will also join OBSH; Turkey, Romania, and Bulgaria will hold trilateral talks on OBSH in late June or early July. Gurdeniz thanked us for weighing in with the GOR and GOB, and credited this for the two countries' more positive attitude toward OBSH. He asked that we also urge Georgia to join OBSH (for info exchange only, since Georgia lacks a real navy); Tbilisi has been hesitant to do so, he said.

NATO and BLACK SEA HARMONY

16. (C/REL USA, GBR, AUS, CAN) Gurdeniz reported that Turkey has assigned an officer to NATO's Joint Information and Analysis Center at Naples for maritime domain awareness and OBSH coordination. We welcomed this, and asked for Turkey's thinking on a NATO observer being stationed at the Eregli OBSH facility. Gurdeniz replied that the TUN is positive

ANKARA 00003435 002 OF 002

toward this, and that the assignment of a NATO observer is a Turkish national decision and not open to review by other littorals participating in OBSH. However, he went on, the facility at Eregli is undergoing construction and other national officers are not yet in place. It may be a year or more before the NATO observer could begin work. Gurdeniz added that systems advances will soon allow OBSH to pass even more useful information to CC-MAR Naples.

A Modest Vision for BLACKSEAFOR

17. (C/REL USA, GBR, AUS, CAN) We reminded Gurdeniz of reftel point that we would prefer that BLACKSEAFOR (BSF) not be transformed into a standing operational force. He noted that BSF is a consensus-based organization, so any such change would need the approval of all the littorals. He said that Turkey's long-term thinking was that -- should all the littorals agree -- BSF members would be able to request that BSF "activate" in order to track a suspicious vessel or some similar contingency. Such an activation, which Gurdeniz said would be modest -- "as few as two ships", would also require unanimity. The activated vessels would follow the suspect vessel's progress and take appropriate MIO action.

18. (C/REL USA, GBR, AUS, CAN) Gurdeniz said that he was optimistic that Russia will understand in the medium or long run that there is no threat to them from temporary NATO involvement in the Black Sea (NFI). In turn, he believed that Bulgaria and Romania will soon "accept the role" of BSF in maritime security, and relax their objections.

Comment: The Mastermind

19. (C/REL USA, GBR, AUS, CAN) While we remain cautious about Turkey's vision for BLACKSEAFOR's mission expansion, Gurdeniz described to us a fairly modest vision for how BSF could become more operational if the littorals so agree. He may be overly optimistic about Bulgaria and Romania accepting this vision, however. Strongly supported by his senior officers,

Gurdeniz is the intellectual driving force in the Turkish Navy for its Black Sea maritime security policy. He can be glib (for example asserting the familiar Turkish line that there are no threats in the Black Sea, only manageable risks), but he also understands our concerns about the Black Sea and is working to enhance OBSH's interaction with the Alliance. We will keep pushing him in that direction.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON